

terest in the property; they are, naturally enough, averse to pay the whole expense of an improvement of which they will reap only a small portion of the benefit. Now, it is evident that it is impossible, by any general regulation, so to spread any charges for the permanent improvement of house property over a series of years, as to make the burden and the advantage in every case precisely proportionate; but still a fair approach to an equalization of the burden and the advantage may be attained. In other cases, the landlord pays the sewers' rate, and the interest of his lessee may be greater than his own. For the sake of an average, it has been assumed that it would be fair (reckoning house property as worth not more than thirty years' purchase) to spread the burden over thirty years. In order to repay 2*l.* 2*s.*, with 5 per cent. interest in thirty years, about 3*l.* 3*s.* must be paid in that time; and, therefore, the passage which I have cited should have been, "an efficient sewer could be formed at the cost, if paid for at once, of 2*l.* 2*s.* per house; or, if the payment should be spread over thirty years, at an annual charge of about 3*s.* per house."—I am, Sir, &c.

Dec. 18, 1847.

AN OBSERVER.

ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART.

For the full comprehension of art (said Mr. A. G. Henderson, in a paper on this subject, read on the 1st inst., at the Royal Institution, Manchester), we require to have a complete philosophy of the human mind, not only as regards its imaginative and ideal attributes, but in its entirety. In the same manner as in the application of the laws of motion, we require a complete knowledge of the various causes that often modify and suspend them. The effect of a picture, a statue, a piece of music, or a building, will be destroyed or greatly modified, by preconceived notions, and by various feelings. The importance of having correct ideas as to the means and ends of the fine arts, will be readily acknowledged when it is considered to what an extent the various arts are employed in civilized life; for, in addition to the useful and agreeable aspect of things, almost every thing has its beautiful aspect. In reference to our churches and churches, our public buildings, dwelling-houses, gardens, and domestic arrangements, we are in constant relation with things in their æsthetical aspect. Above all things, it is desirable that we should definitely settle in our minds the correct conception as to what is the end of the fine arts. If the end be merely the production of the agreeable or the pleasurable, then every work of art that entertains us for the moment will have fulfilled its mission, and Shakespeare and Michelangelo are reduced to the level of the merry-andrew and the puppet-show. If, on the other hand, we look upon art as having a mission from on high, as being the handmaiden of religion and philosophy, designed like them to purify and enlighten like them, to develop the spiritual and divine capacities of our nature; then art assumes a totally different aspect; it becomes invested with a sacred character; and it will be at our peril and at our cost if we refuse or neglect the aid which it is destined to give. The men who have produced the highest works of art have not been men of frivolous and superficial minds, but just the reverse—men of earnest, deep, truthful, and loving minds. When I mention the names of Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Michelangelo, Raphael, Beethoven, and Weber, it strikes us at once that these were not the men to labour for people's amusement. No! they were men whose perceptions of truth and moral excellence were the highest and the noblest, and whose feelings of the beautiful in their respective arts were of that powerful and engrossing character as irresistibly to impel them to a realization of them; and to fix in forms of undying excellence a spiritual manifestation that should penetrate and exalt the hearts of millions of their fellow-creatures, when the souls that conceived them should be translated into realms of more surpassing beauty. Descending to the crowd of inferior artists, we shall find that their inferiority depends more upon the want of moral greatness than upon a want of power over the mechanical means of their art. Passing from the creators of art, in what class of men, let me ask, do the works of art make the greatest

impression—what class of men is the most susceptible of feeling its beauties and its excellencies? It is the cultivated, the earnest, the good, the wise, the self-governed. * * * The function of the beautiful in the arts is to serve as a medium for the manifestation of pure and exalted sentiment, of great and general truth, and of the lighter graces and fancies, which seem to be their attendant spirits. If I am right in this view, it follows that every artist—whether a poet, a musician, a sculptor, or a painter—who presents us mean, sensual, low, and grovelling thoughts and sentiments, let the medium be as beautiful as it may, understands not his mission as an artist,—nay, more, he incurs a fearful responsibility by investing with a beautiful form the false and the bad wishes instead of the true and good. "He who has learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much towards being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learned to express himself grammatically and melodiously has towards being a great poet. The language is, indeed, more difficult of acquirement in the one case than in the other, and possesses more power of delighting the sense, while it speaks to the intellect; but it is, nevertheless, nothing more than language; and all those excellencies which are peculiar to the painter as such, are merely what rhythm, melody, precision, and force, are in the words of the orator and the poet,—necessary to their greatness, but not the tests of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined." I quote this passage because it expresses, in a happy manner, what I believe frequently occurs to every genuine lover of the arts, for he frequently meets with works which have never advanced one step beyond the language spoken of.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

THE anti-laminating rails, invented by Mr. Thorneycroft, having been tested for five to six months at the Paddington station, are said to have been lately examined, and found to be sound as when laid down, presenting a contrast to the state of ordinary rails, which have become rugged and gone all to pieces in much less time in such a situation, where the wear and tear is very great.—The profits of the sale of newspapers and periodicals, sold at the metropolitan stations by a host of poor creatures who earned an honest livelihood thereby, for want of less readily obtained employment, appear to have so excited the acquisitive propensity of the great directors, as not only to have led them to require a heavy 'rent,' at these stations, but induced the Brighton openly to advertise for tender "the privilege of vending newspapers and periodicals at the Brighton and other stations on the lines belonging to that company." This is really altogether worse than the absorption of the 'Blue Boars' and the 'Pigs and Whistles' into the Birmingham station. We half seriously recommended the lodging-house keepers to look out, but little did we think of giving warning to the lame, the limbed, and the paralytic, whom we have so often seen, with wistful eyes and hungry countenances, plying their humble avocations at the various stations of the 'princely' companies throughout the country! While exposing such a practice to the feelings which it cannot but excite, however, let us do justice to these really at times munificent officials,—to the 'enlightened munificence' of the 'railway princes,'—as we have it, in the columns of a contemporary, who intimates that the directors of the London and North-Western have just announced their intention to build a mechanics' hall at Wolverton for their work-people, at a cost of 3,000*l.*, with lecture-room, library, and reading-room, tea and ladies' rooms, &c. We only wish that the munificent doers of so meritorious and enlightened an act of even self-interest had not their glory tarnished as a class by occasional doings of so different a description.—The number of patents for inventions (original and improvements) connected with

railway construction, which have been obtained in France, was:—in 1843, 19; in 1844, 22; in 1845, 88; in 1846, 131—total, 260. Of these not above three or four have been carried out so as to realize any advantage to the inventors, and those which have are of English origin—one of them Mr. Stephenson's, and under which he receives a premium of 50*l.* for each machine adopting his patent improvement.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC.

MR. HYDE CLARK suggests the application of the electric telegraph to musical purposes! He remarks, that if a sufficient number of wires were used, a set of chimes might be as easily rung as two bells—indeed, that the chimes in York Minster, if there are any, might be rung from London as well as at York. Where bells are placed in a high tower, as some carillons or chimes in Flanders are, he suggests that they might by telegraph be played with much more convenience from the bottom of the tower than at the top. By a proper application of wires, also, two organs or two apollonicons, he observes, might be played at any distance apart, by one performer, thus realizing by electric telegraph what Professor Wheatstone is said to contemplate by acoustic telegraph,—conveying musical sounds and compositions. We may yet, he thinks, have electrical organs in our churches as well as electrical clocks in our houses, and worked almost as cheaply,—an idea perhaps somewhat less objectionable—at least if a Haydn or a Mozart were at headquarters—than the mechanical delivery of second-hand sermons by telegraph through the (even though sanctified) mouth of the clerk of the telegraph, as lately suggested.—A Newcastle shareholder has been summoned to the police-court under a charge of conspiring with the clerks of the telegraph to the prejudice of the Electro-Telegraphic Company, for the obtaining of the prices of shares transmitted by telegraph. The moral criminality of an unscrupulous advantage thus derived is very obvious; but surely the power and advantage thus confined to the Telegraphic Company and their clerks by patent is equally liable to be taken unscrupulously advantage of, even without the knowledge or connivance of shareholders. How are the company or their officials themselves effectually prevented from 'speculating' unfairly, to the disadvantage of others kept in ignorance of what they have thus now got the exclusive means of obtaining into their own hands? The duty of the clerks, it seems, was to transmit the exclusive intelligence of the state of consols, &c., on to Edinburgh; and they declared that as 'their written instructions on this head were not so specific as to prohibit their doing what they had done' (i), they were not aware that they were acting wrong in revealing the secrets of the telegraph, especially as their inducement to do so was strengthened by the fact that their salaries were only a guinea a week to each of them,—a limitation which, however effectually it may have prevented them from 'speculating' themselves, does not appear to have been the best mode of securing their fidelity from the bribing assaults of those whose means were not so limited. The company's solicitor, Mr. Chater, stated in reply to the recommendation of the magistrates to indict at the sessions, that 'it was not the wish of the company to adopt harsh measures, but they must be protected in the enjoyment of their patent, and not be defrauded with impunity.'

HIGHTON'S ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.—Sir: I observe in several railway papers of last week, a letter by a Mr. Chapman, of Leicester, copied from your journal of the 11th, in which he says, "The one-wired telegraph used at Baden-Baden, appears to be that of Brett and Little." I do not know from what source Mr. Chapman derives his information, but whatever it be, he has been deceived as to the point. Your statement some weeks ago, that the Baden government had adopted Highton's gold-leaf telegraph, was quite correct; and I am sure you will agree with me, that before Mr. Chapman contradicted it, he ought to have taken more pains to ascertain the correctness of this information.

Euston Station.

EDW. HIGHTON.